

# JAGORI RURAL CHARITABLE TRUST

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2024 TO DECEMBER 2024



jagorigrameen



# COMMUNITY INTERVENTION FOR RIGHT AND ENTITLEMENT

## SESSION WITH PANCHAYAT REPRESENTATIVES ON SUSTAINABLE GOALS

Jagori facilitated a remarkable meeting with panchayat representatives, marked by strong participation of women, showcasing their growing role in the Panchayati Raj system. The meeting was attended by 30 representatives from the Rait, Kangra, and Nagrota Bagwan Blocks of District Kangra. The meeting began with an engaging introductory session where each participant shared their motivations for contesting the elections and presented their visions for community development. The meeting included an educational session on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing how panchayat representatives could contribute to global efforts in addressing critical challenges like environmental sustainability and climate change. This session also stressed the importance of improving health conditions within local communities. The gathering provided an invaluable opportunity for panchayat officials to reflect on their responsibilities, share their accomplishments, and gain insights into global sustainability initiatives. The active involvement of women in the discussions highlighted the progress toward greater empowerment and representation of women in local governance. Participants discussed various successful initiatives undertaken in their communities. These included establishing a dispensary to improve access to healthcare, organizing tree-planting drives to enhance environmental sustainability, and conducting awareness campaigns focused on women's rights. They also described their efforts in creating a park for children to promote recreational activities, constructing a gym for adults to encourage physical fitness, and improving local schools to enhance educational opportunities. Additional achievements involved building homes for underprivileged families to address housing challenges, tarring roads to improve transportation infrastructure, and constructing toilets to ensure better sanitation and hygiene. The meeting underscored the dedication of panchayat representatives to fostering sustainable and inclusive development within their communities, reflecting a strong commitment to improving lives and contributing to broader global efforts.



## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES WITH LIFE-SAVING FIRST AID SKILLS

On July 27th, 2024, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized a one-day session on first aid skills at the Kangra Block Office, attended by 60 community members. Dr. Yamini Sharma, a community health officer, and the Dharamshala Animal Rescue team served as resource persons, offering practical insights into emergency care. Yamini Sharma began by explaining the importance of first aid as the critical care given before professional help arrives. She demonstrated how to assemble a first aid box with essentials like painkillers, paracetamol, antiseptic cream, bandages, cotton, and scissors, urging participants to keep these items readily accessible. Through hands-on demonstrations, participants learned how to handle fractures by immobilizing the limb with a rigid object and securing it with a bandage. For heavy bleeding, Dr. Yamini Sharma emphasized applying firm pressure to control blood loss. Burn care techniques involved cooling the burn under running water and applying ointment, with advice to seek medical attention for severe cases. The session also addressed dog and snake bites. Dr. Yamini Sharma highlighted the importance of thoroughly washing dog bites and obtaining rabies vaccinations. For snake bites, she advised immobilizing the person to slow venom spread and avoiding tight bindings. Taking a photo of the snake was recommended to assist with treatment. A CPR demonstration showcased life-saving techniques. Dr. Sharma guided participants to check for a pulse and breathing before performing chest compressions, ensuring the correct depth and rhythm on a hard surface. The Dharamshala Animal Rescue team provided insights on giving first aid to injured animals, stressing gentle handling to avoid bites and the importance of rabies vaccinations. They answered questions and encouraged kindness toward animals. By the end of the session, participants were inspired to create first aid kits for their homes, recognizing the importance of preparedness. This initiative by Jagori Rural Charitable Trust not only imparted crucial first aid skills but also fostered a sense of confidence and community readiness.





## ONE-DAY WORKSHOP ON GOOD GOVERNANCE, GENDER, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

On August 14, 2024, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized a one-day workshop at Jagori Campus, Rakkar, which was attended by 58 participants (40 women and 18 men) from Kangra, Rait, Nagrota Bagwan blocks, and District Chamba. The workshop aimed to promote understanding of good governance, gender equality, and human rights while addressing systemic inequalities in society. The workshop, facilitated by Sarika Sinha, focused on fundamental rights such as education, health, equality, and freedom. Participants explored the challenges posed by caste, religion, race, and class-based divisions, which continue to perpetuate inequality. The workshop emphasized the importance of linking good governance with human rights by ensuring transparency, accountability, and equitable service distribution. It also examined governance challenges like caste-based discrimination, corruption, and misuse of power, and their impact on marginalized groups. A "problem tree" analysis further deepened participants' understanding of issues related to unemployment, access to basic human rights, and social justice. Special attention was given to gender rights and the need for inclusive governance to address the specific challenges faced by women and marginalized groups. The workshop concluded by emphasizing the importance of fostering equality, transparency, and accountability in governance for meaningful social justice.



## DIALOGUE BETWEEN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNITY

On September 10, 2024, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized a one-day dialogue meeting at the District Rural Development Agency office in Dharamshala. A total of 60 participants from the development blocks of Kangra, Rait, and Nagrota Bagwan attended the meeting, including Panchayat representatives, monitoring committee members, and officials from various government departments. The primary objective of this dialogue was to strengthen communication and collaboration among Panchayat representatives, community members, and administrative authorities, and to provide updates on government schemes, legal reforms, and administrative mechanisms to ensure effective local governance. To achieve this, administrative representatives from the District Rural Development Agency (including Swachh Bharat Mission and NRLM), District Program Office, Tehsil Social Welfare Department, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) participated in the dialogue, informing Panchayat representatives and monitoring committee members about various schemes and new amendments. Participants gained a better understanding of government schemes and a commitment to enhancing collaboration for effective local governance.



## WORKSHOP ON CONSTITUTION & JUST GOVERNANCE

In October month, Jagori organized three days capacity-building workshop to enhance the knowledge and skills of monitoring committee members and the Jagori team. A total of 53 participants, including 24 community members and 29 Jagori team members, attended the workshops. Facilitated by Shri Lal Singh from the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, the sessions aimed to deepen participants' understanding of the Indian Constitution and promote good governance. The workshops began with participant introductions and a collective reading of the Preamble. This set the tone for an engaging exploration of India's historical journey, starting from the Magna Carta and moving through significant social and political movements during British rule. Key milestones such as the Government of India Act 1935, the formation of the Constituent Assembly, and the drafting process of the Constitution were discussed in detail, with a focus on Fundamental Rights, Duties, and Directive Principles. The second day of the workshops concentrated on the practical application of good governance at different levels, including the village, Panchayat, state, and national levels. Participants examined the Directive Principles and the Right to Accountability Law, which provided a foundation for group activities. These activities involved drafting accountability frameworks that addressed roles, responsibilities, and transparency measures in government services. The final day of the workshops featured discussions on the 5th and 6th Schedules of the Constitution, an interactive Q&A session, and a collective commitment by participants to apply their newfound constitutional knowledge to empower their communities and improve local governance. The workshops concluded with a sense of purpose and determination to uphold constitutional principles in everyday governance.



## WORKSHOP ON GENDER EQUALITY, PATRIARCHY, AND LEGAL RIGHTS WITH ANGANWARI WORKERS

From October 17 to 19, 2024, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized a three-day residential workshop at Rakkar campus on the theme “**Gender Equality, Patriarchy, and Legal Rights.**” The event brought together 35 Anganwari workers from the Bhawarna Development block. Facilitated by Mrs. Sunita Thakur from Jagori Delhi, the workshop aimed to build participants’ understanding of gender, patriarchy, and societal inequalities while equipping them with knowledge about legal frameworks to address violence against women. Participants were exposed to societal expectations, stereotypes, domestic violence, workplace harassment, and systemic violence. They were introduced to critical laws like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act. Legal procedures like FIRs and non-cognizable reports were explained, along with practical strategies for seeking justice. The workshop highlighted challenges women face, such as lack of property rights, marital sexual violence, and restrictions on freedom. Participants expressed a deeper understanding of gender-based violence and a newfound awareness of their legal rights.





## WORKSHOP ON GENDER EQUALITY AND PATRIARCHY

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organised a three-day residential workshop on "Gender and Patriarchy" from October 25th-27th, 2024. The workshop, led by Ms. Anupama Rawat, involved 25 active women leaders from Rait, Kangra, and Nagrota Bagwan block of district Kangra. The workshop aimed to familiarize participants with gender equality principles, the societal implications of patriarchy, and actionable plans for promoting equality in their communities. The workshop included interactive sessions, group activities, and discussions on themes such as societal gender norms, women's roles, systemic denial of opportunities, and intersectionality of caste, class, and gender. Participants also watched and analyzed the film "Laapata Ladies" to understand systemic challenges faced by women. The workshop concluded with collective brainstorming on dismantling patriarchy and building gender-equitable communities, leaving participants inspired to bring about change in their spheres of influence.





## **CLUSTER-LEVEL MEETING: EMPOWERING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND ORGANIC SOAP-MAKING**

A cluster-level meeting was held on September 24, 2024, at the Rait Block office, focusing on enhancing livelihoods through awareness of government schemes and a demonstration of organic soap-making using natural ingredients. The session introduced livelihood programs like DDU-GKY for skill development, Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana for supporting traditional artisans, and Mukhyamantri Laghu Dukandar Kalyankari Yojana for small business owners. Information about training courses offered by the Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) in Dharamshala was also shared. The highlight of the session was the demonstration of soap-making using locally available aromatic and Ayurvedic plants, promoting entrepreneurship, leadership, and traditional herbal knowledge. Participants expressed enthusiasm and plans to scale up soap-making and collaborate with women's groups. The meeting marked a step towards economic empowerment and sustainable rural development.



## **ONE DAY SESSION WITH MONITORING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized a one-day session with Active Monitoring community members at the Jagori Office in Rakkar on November 28, 2024. The meeting provided a platform for 28 women and 3 men to share their experiences, struggles, and achievements since joining Jagori. Women shared inspiring stories of transformation, empowerment through action, and amplified their voices. Jagori's efforts led to increased awareness and confidence, economic empowerment, and leadership opportunities for women. Notably, Seema, a woman who contested the Panchayat Pradhan election in 2015, won twice and implemented projects worth ₹80 lakhs per ward, exemplifying the impact of Jagori's initiatives.



## MGNREGA ROJGAR MELA

MGNREGA Employment Fair, under "One Billion Rising," was organized by Jagori Rural Charitable Trust in the Block Development Office, Rait, on November 30, 2024.

170 participants attended the event, including representatives from 10 Panchayats and Block Development Officers, aimed to raise awareness about the benefits and process of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

The program highlighted the importance of MGNREGA in ensuring employment and providing facilities to rural households. Women participants shared their experiences and challenges under the scheme, and officials provided guidance and support. The event empowered women and promoted their participation in MGNREGA, aligning with the government's efforts to promote rural employment and development.





## BRINGING CLEAN WATER TO COMMUNITIES IN NEED: A STEP TOWARD A HEALTHIER FUTURE

Jagori, in partnership with Isabel, has successfully installed portable water filters in homes throughout District Kangra, providing clean and safe drinking water to families in need. On September 1, 2024, filters were installed in Theharu, Juhal, Patola, and Khaniyara villages in Dharamshala, enabling families to access clean water from the rivers, particularly during heavy rains when the water becomes polluted, made possible by the use of portable water filters. This initiative reduces the risk of waterborne diseases and ensures long-term benefits through training on filter installation and maintenance. This partnership marks a significant step toward a healthier, more sustainable future for these communities.



# WOMEN'S HEALTH EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND CLAIMING OF HEALTH ENTITLEMENTS



## HEALING THROUGH BODYWORK THERAPY (2 WORKSHOPS)

Jagori organized two bodywork therapy workshops, which were a breath of fresh air! Participants delved into the world of physical wellness, learning techniques to reduce stress, heal from within, and connect with their bodies in a whole new way. It was an enriching experience, promoting relaxation and self-care through mindful movement and therapy.





## **EMPOWERING ANGANWADI WORKERS: UNDERSTANDING GENDER & PATRIARCHY**

In a thought-provoking workshop organized by Jagori with Anganwadi workers, the powerful themes of gender and patriarchy were explored. The session sparked deep conversations about how these forces impact health in our communities. By understanding these dynamics, the workers are now better equipped to support women and children, fostering an environment of equality and empowerment.



## **ASHA HEALTH WORKERS: IGNITING HEALTH AWARENESS**

In an insightful workshop organized by Jagori with Asha Health workers, the powerful themes of gender and patriarchy were explored. The session sparked deep conversations about how these forces impact health in our communities. By understanding these dynamics, the workers are now better equipped to support women and children, fostering an environment of equality and empowerment.

## MIDWIVES FOLLOW-UP: STRENGTHENING MATERNAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The follow-up workshop with midwives was all about growth and collaboration. We shared updates, discussed challenges, and made sure they had the latest knowledge to continue supporting women through every step of their pregnancy journey. It was a powerful session, reinforcing their vital role in maternal health.



## VHSNC MEETING: CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER

Our VHSNC meeting (Village Health, Sanitation, and Nutrition Committee) was a space for important discussions on health awareness. We focused on the ABHA ID card, emphasizing its importance in accessing health services. We also shed light on uterus cancer, discussing prevention, early detection, and the life-saving benefits of regular screenings. It was an engaging session that empowered community leaders to spread these crucial messages far and wide.

We are filled with gratitude as we reflect on the amazing impact we've made together over the last few months. Each workshop, each health camp, each meeting is a step closer to creating healthier, more informed communities.

## 6 HEALTH CAMPS: BRINGING HEALTHCARE TO THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

In September, October, and December, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized six health camps across the Kangra and Nagrota blocks, empowering communities to take control of their health. These camps went beyond simple screenings, offering free check-ups for key health indicators including:

- Blood Pressure (BP)
- Blood Sugar Levels (SUGAR)
- Hemoglobin (Hb)
- Weight & BMI

Through these efforts, we provided not just care, but a pathway to better health and well-being for all.

The response was overwhelming, and we were pleased to offer these essential services, ensuring that everyone had access to the care they deserve. Focusing on prevention and early detection, our goal is to ensure that no one is left behind.



# SUATAINABLE AGRICULTURE, FOREST AND LAND (SAFAL)

## ONE DAY SESSION WITH KVK, HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT AND BEE KEEPING DEPARTMENT

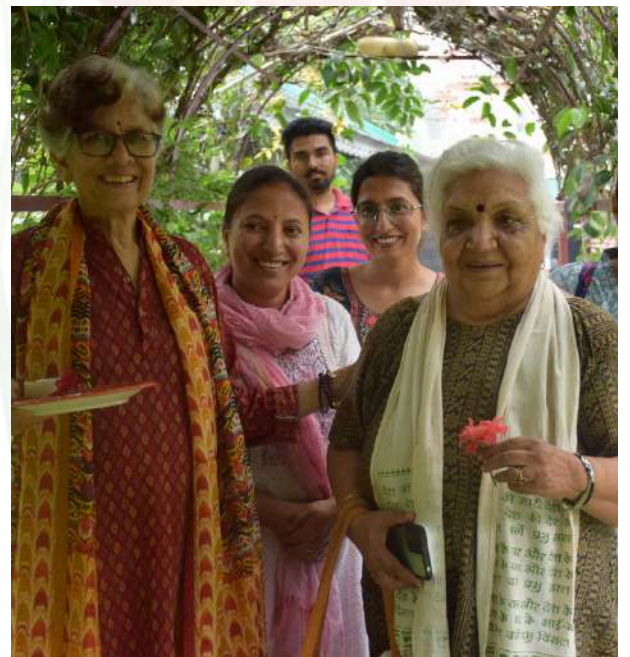
On July 15, 2024, the Jagori Organization a one-day session for 50 farmers from Kangra, Rait, and Nagrota Bagwan to educate them on government schemes and plans for self-reliance. The session was held by the Horticulture Department Kangra, Agricultural Science Center, and Beekeeping Department. The session featured experts from Horticulture Department Kangra, Agricultural Science Center, and Beekeeping Department. The Horticulture Department head, Mrs. Sarita Verma, discussed modern horticultural techniques, irrigation, and fertiliser management, while Dr. Ashok Sharma, head of the Agricultural Science Center, discussed advanced agricultural practices, crop rotation, and protection techniques. Beekeeping Department head, Mr. Rakesh Gupta, discussed modern beekeeping methods, honey production, and marketing. The session was successful, as it made farmers aware of government schemes and resolved their queries, fostering a commitment to applying knowledge to their agricultural practices.





## LEVERAGING SOLAR ENERGY & MILLETS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD

From July 18th-19th, 2024, Jagori organised a session on Sustainable Living with Padma Shri Janak Pala McGilligan, a prominent advocate and activist known for her dedication to promoting gender equality, women's rights and social justice. Janak ji introduced the concept of seed banks and millets and the critical role they play in sustainable agriculture. They provide resilience against climate change and support sustainable agriculture practices by preserving traditional (heirloom) seeds that are well-adapted to local conditions and resistant to pests and diseases. The responses revealed that most of the seeds used were genetically modified. Following this, a documentary featuring Varun Raheja and his work with solar dryers was screened. Solar dryers are valuable tools in food preservation because they harness solar energy to dry foods efficiently and hygienically. They utilise renewable solar energy reducing dependence on fossil fuels and lowering operational costs. Solar dryers can be designed to accommodate various types of food products, from fruits and vegetables to grains and herbs, adapting to local food preservation needs.



## **EMPOWERING FARMERS THROUGH AYUSH PRACTICES AND MEDICINAL PLANT CULTIVATION**

A one-day workshop was conducted for Monitoring Committee Members and Federation members, aimed at promoting the benefits of AYUSH (Ayurvedic, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) practices and the sustainable cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants. The session provided an in-depth exploration of how integrating AYUSH practices can enhance individual well-being and the significant economic potential of medicinal plant cultivation. Dr. Arun Chandan delivered a comprehensive presentation on the role of these plants in supporting farmers' livelihoods, emphasizing opportunities for value-added products and market linkages. The workshop also addressed the critical need for biodiversity conservation, with a focus on the essential role played by Biodiversity Management Committees in implementing conservation initiatives. Additionally, participants were introduced to the e-chark.in app, a powerful platform offering resources and tools to aid farmers in cultivating medicinal and aromatic plants, thereby creating new avenues for income generation. With 40 participants, the workshop successfully equipped stakeholders with practical knowledge and innovative solutions aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing rural livelihoods.



## FOREST FESTIVAL – ACTIVITIES ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND CONSERVATION

As part of the Forest Festival in August ,2024, a successful plantation drive was carried out, resulting in the planting of 1,234 trees. The initiative was supported by the local community, who assumed responsibility for the ongoing care and protection of the plants. Key activities included the planting of 468 fruit trees on private lands owned by farmers and adolescent girls, as well as 55 Peepal trees across 11 Panchayats. In addition, 711 medicinal plants were planted in designated forest areas, with the collaboration of Jagori and the Horticulture and Forest Departments. This initiative not only contributed to climate change mitigation efforts but also promoted community engagement in environmental conservation and the enhancement of local biodiversity.



## CELEBRATING TRADITION: JAGORI'S FOOD FESTIVAL PROMOTES HEALTHY EATING IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Jagori organized a Traditional Nutritious Food Festival in Rait, Kangra, Nagrota Bagwan blocks of district Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, with the participation of 220 people from the community, school students, teachers, and Monitoring committee members. The festival aimed to raise awareness about the importance of traditional, nutritious foods, especially in the face of the growing popularity of packaged and fast foods. The festival showcased various traditional dishes, such as Ragi Kheer, Gulgule, Ghadi Rotis, and Flour Halwa, prepared using locally sourced, organic ingredients. Monitoring committee members, Kamla, educated participants about the health benefits of natural foods over chemically grown grains. Jagori's senior worker, Asha, urged parents to reduce fast food consumption and encourage traditional meals at home.

Another event was organised at the Government Middle School in Majetli village, under the Nagrota Assembly Constituency, with 40 children participating. The main objective of the food festival was to introduce children to traditional local dishes. The event was attended by distinguished guests and Jagori founder, Abha Bhaiya. The festival featured an exhibition showcasing nutritious traditional foods, including arbi leaf fritters, gulgule, bhature, khoru, kodra tea, lughdi ka khatta, seera, and khatti bhujji. The guests explained to the children how these traditional, healthy dishes are an important part of Himachali culture and their physical and mental health benefits.





## WORKSHOP ON MILLETS AND NATURAL FARMING IN CHAMBA

A two-day workshop was held in Chamba on October 6-7, 2024, under the BFTW program, with 36 participants from various communities. The workshop focused on millet cultivation, sustainable farming, and the benefits of natural farming practices.

On October 6, 2024, Mr. Som Krishan led sessions on chemical-free farming, seed preservation, and organic inputs like Jeevamrut and Dashparni Arka. Participants also learned about crop certification, forming Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), and the process for market access. On October 7, 2024, the session focused on the nutritional and environmental benefits of millets, highlighting varieties such as ragi, jowar, and bajra. Practical tips on sowing, harvesting, and storing millets were shared, alongside nutritious millet-based recipes.

Participants expressed their appreciation for the knowledge gained and committed to applying and sharing it in their communities.



## KISAN MELA – EMPOWERING FARMERS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

On November 29, 2024, Kisan Bhawan, Ichhi (Kangra) hosted the Kisan Mela- Farmers Fair, organized by Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, with 224 participants, including 203 women farmers from 21 villages. Held under the global One Billion Rising Campaign, the event served as a significant platform for empowering women farmers while promoting sustainable agricultural practices and environmental conservation.

During the event, local farmers shared their experiences with organic farming and eco-friendly practices. Experts from the Agriculture, Horticulture, and AYUSH departments provided valuable insights into government schemes, organic fertilizers, millet cultivation, and climate change. A special focus was placed on millet cultivation, with traditional seeds distributed to encourage healthier, more nutritious farming.

The Mela also featured a Pine Needle Products Stall, highlighting eco-friendly items made from locally sourced pine needles. Women-led self-help groups showcased organic products, including Ragi Flour, Millet Porridge, and herbal soaps, demonstrating the potential for income generation through sustainable practices.

Presentations from Kashmiri Lal on the health benefits of millet cultivation, and from Parveen, a member of a self-help group, encouraged others to adopt organic farming and create value-added products.

The Kisan Mela successfully raised awareness on the importance of organic farming, millet cultivation, and eco-friendly alternatives, reinforcing the shared commitment to a sustainable and resilient agricultural future.



# VIOLENCE RESOURCE, TRAINING AND INTERVENTION CENTER

## STANDING AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: CASE UPDATES (AUG–DEC 2024)

Every woman who walks into Jagori Nari Adalat carries a story—of pain, resilience, and an unyielding desire for dignity. Between August and December 2024, over 40 cases were brought before the Adalat, each one a stark reminder of the injustices women continue to face. These were not just legal disputes; they were stories of survival, of women refusing



to accept violence and control as their destiny. Domestic violence remained the most reported issue, with women seeking safety, justice, and often, a way to rebuild their lives. Some cases involved women trapped in abusive marriages, fighting for separation and financial security. Others sought justice against cyber harassment and sexual violence, crimes that have only grown with the increasing reach of technology. While mediation helped resolve many cases, allowing women to move forward without the burden of prolonged legal battles, some required intervention in the courts, ensuring that the perpetrators were held accountable.

Beyond the legal resolutions, these cases speak to something deeper—the courage it takes for a woman to step forward, to say ‘enough,’ and to demand her right to a life free from fear. The journey is not easy. Many women continue to struggle, facing pressure from their families and communities to remain silent. But what stands out is their determination, their refusal to be invisible.

Jagori Nari Adalat is more than just a legal platform; it is a space of solidarity, where women find not just legal aid, but emotional support and the strength to keep fighting. With every case we take up, we reaffirm our collective commitment—**no woman should have to fight alone.**




## **BREAKING FREE: SHWETA'S JOURNEY TO SELF-RELIANCE**

Shweta's story is a testament to resilience, the power of informed choices, and the role of community support in helping women reclaim their lives. It is a story of courage—of a young woman who defied societal constraints, challenged patriarchal control, and built a future on her own terms.

Like many young women, Shweta dreamed of a bright future. But in her 12th grade, those dreams were abruptly halted when Satpal, a man who promised her love and security, manipulated her into marriage under false pretenses. What was supposed to be a new beginning soon turned into a life of isolation and control. Her education was cut short, her mobility restricted, and her voice silenced. Cut off from her own family—who disapproved of the marriage—Shweta found herself alone, trapped in a cycle of emotional and psychological subjugation.

Shweta's turning point came when Satpal approached Jagori Nari Adalat, claiming that his wife had gone missing. When the team reached out to Shweta, she hesitated at first. But when she finally answered their call, she found a space where she could be heard without fear of judgment. She mustered the courage to meet them, a decision that would change the course of her life.

With Jagori's support, Shweta revealed the harsh reality of her life—how she had been coerced into marriage, stripped of her autonomy, and left with no option but to flee. The oppressive environment at her in-laws' home had suffocated her, but the possibility of reclaiming her independence gave her the strength to move forward. Determined to never return to a life of control, Shweta moved to Chandigarh, where she found work and gradually



began to rebuild her life. But true freedom also required legal closure. With Jagori Nari Adalat facilitating the mediation, Shweta was able to file for divorce, finally severing ties with her past. The process was not just legal but also deeply personal—it marked the beginning of her self-reliance.

Today, Shweta is an independent woman. She has resumed her education, secured employment, and, most importantly, regained control over her own life. While her relationship with her biological family remains strained, she has found solidarity in the women’s movement and her newfound community. She is no longer just a survivor—she is a leader, an inspiration, and a reminder that no woman should have to accept oppression as her fate.

Shweta’s journey underscores the critical role of feminist collectives and community-based organizations like Jagori (Nari Adalat) in supporting women facing violence and systemic injustice. Her story is not just about one woman’s victory; it is about the power of sisterhood, legal awareness, and collective action in challenging patriarchal structures.

As we amplify voices like Shweta’s, we must continue to strengthen networks of support, advocate for accessible legal aid, and create safe spaces where women can reclaim their rights. Shweta’s story is a call to action—because when one woman breaks free, she lights the path for countless others to do the same.

# AWARE GIRLS ACTION FOR JUSTICE – AGAJ



## EMPOWERING GIRLS WITH DIGITAL SKILLS

In July 2024, Jagori, in collaboration with the CII-MCM Institute and C-DAC Manthan Computer Centre, conducted two Digital Literacy Training Programs for 31 adolescent girls from Dharamshala, Kangra, Rait, and Nagrota Bagwan blocks. These workshops aimed to equip young women with essential digital skills, boosting their confidence and preparing them for academic and professional opportunities.

### Training Highlights

**Day 1:** Basics of computer, MS Word, and document formatting.

**Day 2:** MS PowerPoint, Excel, image editing, and typing skills.

**Day 3:** Resume building, email setup, and online communication.

By the end of the training, participants had gained practical digital skills and a newfound confidence in using technology. One participant shared, *“This training has boosted my confidence in using computers, and I feel ready to apply these skills in my studies and career.”*

Jagori remains committed to empowering adolescent girls with digital knowledge, opening doors to education and employment in today’s tech-driven world.



## EMPOWERING GIRLS THROUGH CAR WASHING WORKSHOP: BREAKING STEREOTYPES AND BUILDING SKILLS

For the first time, Jagori organized a three-day car washing workshop in Kangra district, where 18 adolescent girls from Kangra, Rait, and Nagrota blocks stepped into a traditionally male-dominated skill. This initiative marked a bold move toward breaking gender stereotypes and empowering girls with hands-on learning.

### Workshop Highlights

**Day 1:** Introduction, sharing motivations, and goal setting.

**Day 2:** Hands-on sessions on interior & exterior cleaning, waxing, and using pressure washers.

**Day 3:** Teamwork, time management, and confidence-building exercises.

### Voices of Empowerment

- *“Usually, it’s boys who do this work, so it felt empowering to learn these skills myself.”* – **Mamta**
- *“By participating in this workshop, I proved that girls can do it too. I want to change mindsets.”* – **Riya**
- *“Now I know how to clean and take care of a car.”* – **Preeti**

Jagori continues to create spaces for skill-building and gender equality, ensuring that girls have the confidence to pursue any path they choose.



## **DISASTER MANAGEMENT TRAINING: EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

On August 25th, 2024, Jagori organized a one-day Disaster Management Training Workshop at its campus as part of the AGAJ program, led by disaster response expert Sudesh Bedi. The workshop saw the participation of 26 adolescents from Kangra district, who gained crucial first aid skills to effectively respond to emergencies.

### **Key Learnings & Activities**

- Understanding and managing fractures, severe bleeding, and choking.
- Hands-on training in CPR, bandaging, and burn management.
- Creating makeshift stretchers for emergency transport in remote areas.

### **Voices of Impact**

- *"Practicing disaster management skills has given me the confidence to assist others in an emergency."* – **Saloni**

This workshop is a vital step in Jagori's mission to equip youth with practical knowledge, enabling them to support their communities during crises.



## EMPOWERING GIRLS IN STEM: ELECTRICAL SKILLS WORKSHOP

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust (JRCT), in partnership with Tools for Life Foundation (Germany), hosted a transformative Electricity Training Workshop under the AGAJ program at JRCT's Rakkar Campus. This week-long workshop equipped girls from Kangra and Chamba districts with practical electrical skills.



### Workshop Highlights:

- Electricity Basics: Introduction to electrical systems.
- Lamp Making: Creating lamps from everyday materials.
- Safety First: Emphasizing safe electrical handling.

### Participant Feedback:

- *"Learning to use a test pen was an adventure! Now, I feel confident making lamps from materials we usually discard."* – **Pooja**
- *"I used to be scared of electrical appliances, but this training has boosted my confidence."* – **Dishali**

### Impact:

- Technical Skills: Key electrical knowledge.
- Confidence: Boosted self-esteem and creativity.
- Future Inspiration: Motivated to explore STEM and break gender norms.

This workshop is a step toward empowering girls to pursue technical careers and drive change in their communities.



## **EMPOWERING WOMEN IN PLUMBING: A WORKSHOP FOR SKILL AND CONFIDENCE**

Jagori, in partnership with CII MCM, hosted a one-month Plumbing Workshop under the AGAJ initiative at the MCM Institute. The workshop aimed to equip local women and girls with plumbing skills, helping them break into a traditionally male-dominated field. Participants learned pipe fitting, leak repair, and fixture installation, gaining practical skills for a brighter future.

### **Toolkit Distribution & Follow-Up:**

The workshop ended with a Toolkit Distribution Event, where participants received tools to apply their skills in their communities. A follow-up session focused on water conservation, pipe cutting, and wall installations.

Participant Reflections:

- *“I am proud to be called 'Plumber Didi' in my village.”* – **Tanisha**
- *“The workshop gave me the confidence to help my family and work as a plumber.”* – **Gurjeet**
- *“I installed pipes at home, and my family is proud.”* – **Shivangi**
- *“I am solving plumbing problems in my village, and people trust me.”* – **Priya**

### **Conclusion:**

This workshop empowered women with the skills, confidence, and respect to break gender barriers and foster self-reliance in plumbing.





## UNDERSTANDING GENDER AND PATRIARCHY WORKSHOP ON RAISING AWARENESS AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust's Advance Understanding of Gender and Patriarchy workshop was a powerful two-day initiative aimed at raising awareness among adolescent girls about gender equality, societal biases, and empowerment. Facilitated by Anita Mathur the workshop began with discussions on how gender



stereotypes are deeply ingrained, even in names, and helped participants differentiate between biological sex and socially constructed gender roles. Through interactive activities, they challenged common misconceptions such as "women can't do heavy labor" and "only men belong in the army," while also sharing personal experiences of discrimination, particularly in caregiving roles. The second day featured motivational songs, a screening of Lapata Ladies, and a symbolic scarf activity that illustrated the restrictive nature of patriarchy. Participants also learned about their fundamental rights, the importance of transgender inclusion, and recent legal advancements. Engaging group presentations on gender discrimination further reinforced their learning. The workshop concluded with songs of empowerment and a collective pledge to challenge societal norms, fight gender bias, and promote equality in their communities.



## KISHOR-KISHORI UTSAV: IGNITING YOUNG MINDS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized Kishor-Kishori Utsav that served as a dynamic platform for 427 girls and 148 boys to engage in critical conversations on gender equality, social norms, and active citizenship. Through interactive games, role-reversal activities, and structured discussions, participants were encouraged to critically examine societal biases and reimagine a more inclusive world. The 'Counting Money' stall highlighted the importance of financial literacy and shared economic responsibilities, while other activities reinforced that leadership, decision-making, and professional opportunities should not be defined by gender. By providing a safe and empowering space, the event enabled adolescents to express their perspectives freely, fostering mutual respect, confidence, and awareness. Reflections from participants, such as "No job is just for boys or girls", underscored the event's lasting impact in reshaping mindsets and inspiring youth-led change. More than a gathering, the Utsav represented a crucial step toward dismantling gender barriers and nurturing a generation committed to equality, justice, and social transformation. Jagori Rural Charitable Trust remains steadfast in its mission to equip young people with the knowledge and confidence to drive meaningful change in their communities.



## **GENDER & PATRIARCHY WORKSHOP: RAISING AWARENESS AND CHALLENGING SOCIETAL NORMS**

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust's Gender & Patriarchy Workshop was a transformative two-day residential program aimed at equipping adolescent girls with a deeper understanding of gender roles, discrimination, and empowerment. Facilitated by Anupama, the workshop featured interactive activities, including non-verbal communication exercises, self-reflection on gender awareness, and a daily routine analysis, which highlighted the unequal burden of household chores on girls. Discussions on gendered traits and societal biases exposed how leadership is often assigned to boys, while domestic responsibilities fall on girls. A screening of Lapata Ladies reinforced the real-life impact of patriarchy. On the second day, participants engaged with motivational songs, feminist critiques of Bollywood, vision board exercises, and role-plays to imagine a world free from gender bias—envisioning homes without dowry, safe and equal educational spaces, and a society inclusive of all genders. The workshop concluded with 32 adolescent girls feeling empowered to challenge societal norms, advocate for gender equality, and drive change within their communities.



## MOTHER-DAUGHTER FAIRS: NURTURING BONDS AND PROMOTING EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SHARED EXPERIENCES

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized two Mother-Daughter Fairs, bringing together over 437 participants to strengthen family bonds and promote gender equality. The fairs featured trust-building exercises, creative expression workshops, and communication skills sessions, fostering open dialogue and mutual understanding. Highlights included cultural performances, a skit on “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao,” and interactive games that encouraged camaraderie and challenged societal stereotypes. The events concluded with the distribution of fruit plants, symbolizing growth and the nurturing of relationships. Participants shared heartfelt reflections, with mothers appreciating the opportunity to connect deeply with their daughters, while daughters gained insight into the challenges women face and the power of mutual support. Through these initiatives, Jagori continues to empower women and girls, strengthen family relationships, and advocate for gender equality.



## **SOCIAL MEDIA CAREER GUIDANCE: EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR DIGITAL SUCCESS AND RESPONSIBLE ONLINE ENGAGEMENT**

The Social Media Career Guidance Workshop provided adolescent boys and girls with strategic insights and practical skills to leverage digital platforms for professional growth. Designed to bridge the gap between passion and career, the workshop focused on personal branding, content creation, income generation, and responsible online engagement. Participants explored their unique strengths through the “Your Superpower” exercise, developed mock social media profiles to showcase their talents, and gained exposure to monetization opportunities, including content creation, brand partnerships, and online education. Hands-on sessions covered essential digital skills such as video and audio editing, digital marketing, and audience engagement strategies, equipping attendees with the tools necessary to establish a compelling online presence. Additionally, the workshop addressed the psychological aspects of digital careers, offering guidance on managing burnout, negativity, and maintaining a healthy balance in social media use. By the conclusion of the session, participants had successfully created their first digital content pieces, demonstrating enhanced digital literacy, confidence, and career readiness. This initiative underscores Jagori Rural Charitable Trust’s commitment to empowering youth with the skills and knowledge to navigate the digital landscape responsibly and effectively.



## EXPOSURE VISITS: BROADENING HORIZONS AND EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust organized six exposure visits, engaging 168 adolescents across Kangra and Chamba districts, Himachal Pradesh, to enhance their understanding of law enforcement, governance, agriculture, STEM, and environmental conservation.

Key highlights included a visit to the Dharamshala Police Station, where 56 participants learned about cyber safety, legal rights, and law enforcement procedures. At the Irrigation and Public Health (IPH) Department, 13 peer leaders explored water management and public health services, while the Rice and Wheat Research Centre introduced sustainable agriculture practices. A visit to the SDM Office provided insights into government services and career pathways, and 29 adolescent girls engaged in hands-on STEM learning at the Aavishkaar Center. Lastly, 21 participants explored biodiversity and conservation at the "Prakriti Ki Sair" nature event.

These transformative experiences equipped young leaders with practical knowledge, critical thinking skills, and a strong sense of civic responsibility, empowering them to drive positive change in their communities.





## SONALIKA'S JOURNEY TO EMPOWERMENT

### **Background**

Sonalika, a 19-year-old Arts student from Ketlu (Rait Block), Himachal Pradesh, grew up in a rural environment where educational opportunities for girls were limited. Despite societal constraints, she aspired to pursue higher education and foster a culture of learning and empowerment for young girls in her community.

### **Challenges**

Like many girls in her village, Sonalika faced gender discrimination, limited access to educational resources, and societal expectations that prioritized domestic responsibilities over education. These challenges often discouraged young women from pursuing academic and professional aspirations.

### **Catalyst for Change**

Determined to drive change, Sonalika actively participated in Jagori's workshops, gaining knowledge on gender equality, personal hygiene, and environmental conservation. These sessions ignited a vision to establish a community library, providing a dedicated space for girls to access books, resources, and opportunities for personal growth.

### **Establishing the Community Library**

Sonalika led the initiative to create a learning hub for young girls, curating books and educational materials with a strong focus on gender justice and empowerment. She collaborated with local stakeholders, mobilized resources, and established a safe space where girls could come together to learn, engage, and develop leadership skills.

## **Impact and Empowerment**

The library quickly became a center for learning and skill-building. Sonalika organized career guidance sessions, self-defense training, and health education workshops, equipping young girls with essential life skills and confidence. Her efforts cultivated a supportive environment, enabling girls to discuss challenges, share aspirations, and build resilience against societal norms.

## **Overcoming Resistance**

Despite initial resistance from community members who opposed the idea of girls prioritizing education over traditional roles, Sonalika persevered. Backed by Jagori's mentorship and community support, she navigated these barriers with determination, inspiring other girls to challenge societal norms and pursue their ambitions.

## **Future Aspirations**

Sonalika envisions expanding the library's scope by introducing technology training programs and vocational courses to further enhance girls' digital literacy and career prospects. Her goal is to create a sustainable model of community learning and skill development, ensuring long-term impact.

## **Conclusion**

Sonalika's journey underscores the transformative power of education, leadership, and community support. Her initiative not only improves literacy rates but also empowers young girls to challenge gender norms and pursue meaningful careers. Through her dedication, she is shaping a new generation of confident, informed, and self-reliant young women, proving that with determination and the right resources, sustainable social change is possible.



## **STRENGTHENING FEMINIST LEADERSHIP: REFLECTIONS FROM THE 14TH TWO-WEEK COURSE ON GENDER, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust and Jagori-Sangat hosted the 14th Two-Week Course on Gender, Human Rights, Sustainable Development, and Women's Empowerment from December 20-30, 2024, in Rakkar, Himachal Pradesh. Bringing together 27 participants from India and Nepal, the course served as a transformative space for critical dialogue and intersectional learning, equipping activists and grassroots leaders with tools to challenge systemic oppression and drive social change.

### **Key Themes**

Facilitated by leading feminist scholars, activists, and grassroots leaders, the course explored:

- **Gender and Patriarchy** – Deconstructing norms and challenging hierarchies through interactive exercises.
- **Feminist Economics** – Recognizing women's unpaid labor and advocating for economic justice.
- **Caste, Class, and Social Justice** – Examining Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's legacy and the intersections of caste and gender.
- **LGBTQ+ Rights** – Understanding gender identity, bodily autonomy, and legal protections.
- **Climate Justice** – Addressing industrial agriculture, climate change, and their impact on women farmers.
- **Feminist Leadership & Movement Building** – Strengthening grassroots mobilization and collective action.

### **Impact and the Road Ahead**

The course deepened participants' understanding, strengthened networks, and empowered them to drive change in their communities. Jagori remains committed to amplifying marginalized voices, fostering intersectional feminist spaces, and advancing justice through collective action.





## ADVANCED ALUMNI WORKSHOP: STRENGTHENING MOVEMENTS, DEEPENING PERSPECTIVES

In the ongoing struggle for justice and equity, spaces for reflection and collective strategizing are essential. From August 10-13, 2024, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust and Jagori Delhi organized an Advanced Follow-up Workshop on Emerging National Issues in Dharamshala. This gathering brought together activists, scholars, and grassroots leaders to critically analyze pressing concerns related to democracy, dissent, gender justice, legal rights, and environmental justice, fostering meaningful dialogue and collective action.

With India witnessing increasing restrictions on civil liberties, the workshop addressed the shrinking space for dissent, the implications of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) on minority and gender rights, and the intersectionality of caste, class, gender, and climate justice. Renowned speakers, including Zakia Soman, Nivedita Menon, Navtej Johar, and Rituparna Neog, facilitated thought-provoking sessions on the erosion of constitutional values, patriarchal legal frameworks, and the challenges of reclaiming democratic spaces.

Participants critically examined the politicization of law, the commodification of identities, and the state's role in shaping public discourse. Interactive discussions explored the challenges faced by marginalized communities, the co-option of feminist and queer struggles, and the urgent need for intersectional, rights-based advocacy.

The workshop underscored the importance of resistance, solidarity, and sustained grassroots mobilization. In a time of growing authoritarianism and cultural homogenization, the need to defend constitutional rights and reclaim political agency has never been more urgent. Jagori remains committed to fostering collective action, amplifying marginalized voices, and strengthening movements for social justice.





## JAGORI RURAL IN SOLIDARITY WITH DELHI CHALO PADYATRA

Jagori Rural Charitable Trust proudly stood in solidarity with the Delhi Chalo Padyatra, a remarkable movement led by environmental activist and educator Mr. Sonam Wangchuk. We had the honor of meeting him during his inspiring march in Manali, where he marched alongside hundreds of supporters and people of Ladakh, advocating for the implementation of the 6th Schedule to protect Ladakh's unique environment, ecology and cultural heritage.

### **Our Commitment**

Mr. Wangchuk's initiatives, including the Ice Stupa project and his advocacy for constitutional safeguards for Ladakh, exemplify his unwavering dedication to environmental conservation and community welfare. His courage and determination to champion these causes are truly inspiring.

During the Padayatra, Jagori Rural Executive Director Abha Bhaiya and our team presented Solidarity Statements from Jagori Rural and Vikalp Sangam to Mr. Wangchuk. We also organized a signature campaign to gather support for the Padayatra, which culminated in delivering the signed petitions along with our solidarity statement.

On September 17th, members of the Jagori Rural team participated in a walk to show our support for the Padayatra, covering several kilometers in solidarity with the movement.

### **Our Hope**

We remain hopeful that the demands of the Ladakhi people will be heard and addressed before this peaceful concludes. Together, we stand for a sustainable future for Ladakh and its vibrant cultural landscape.



# JAGORI RURAL CHARITABLE TRUST - RISING FOR FREEDOM IN 2025

Number of Risings (November – December 2024)  
10 RISINGS IN 2 DISTRICTS

## Themes

- Maa Beti Ka Pyaar Rishton Me Nikhar ("Mother-Daughter Love: Strengthening The Bond")
- Citizen Participation, Administration's Responsibility
- Let's Make Our Hearts And Earth Green
- MNREGA Is The Foundation Of Life – Know The Laws, Your Rights, And Opportunities
- The Rights We Have And The Rights We Want
- Empowering Adolescent Girls: A Celebration Of Rights, Education, And Leadership
- Empowering Young Girls With Knowledge About Their Bodies, Health, And Rights
- Rise For Constitution, Secularism, And Freedom For All



## JAGORI RURAL CHARITABLE TRUST & ZONAL HOSPITAL DHARAMSHALA UNITE FOR JUSTICE

In a powerful demonstration of solidarity, Jagori Rural Charitable Trust, Rakkar, joined hands with Zonal Hospital, Dharamshala, to march through the streets, demanding justice for the horrific Kolkata doctor rape case. With unwavering voices and determined spirits, the protestors raised slogans that resonated with the urgency of justice:

"Kahi ka bhi anyay, har jagah ke nyay ke liye khatra hai"

"Beti padhi par bachi nahi"

The streets echoed with the collective calls for justice—"We want justice," "Nyay do, nyay do," and "Sharm karo, sharm karo."

This march was not just a protest; it was a statement—a declaration that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Together, we stand, we speak, and we demand change.





## AMLA: NATURE'S PRECIOUS TREASURE

Today, I had a special encounter—not with a person, but with a fruit called Amla. This incredible fruit has a mix of sour, sweet, and slightly bitter flavors, yet it is packed with exceptional health benefits. While talking to people, I learned that Amla is much more than just a fruit; it is a powerhouse of nutrition. There is an old saying in the hilly regions: “The taste of Amla and the words of elders always have an impact later.” This made me reflect on its deep-rooted significance.

As I explored further, I found that Amla is one of the richest sources of Vitamin C, containing 20 times more Vitamin C than an orange. Additionally, it is packed with Vitamin A, B-complex, potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, fiber, and diuretic acid. Because of this, Amla not only strengthens immunity but also plays a vital role in maintaining heart health, digestion, and skin care.

When we couldn't find Amla in the nearby village, we were informed that wild Amla, naturally grown in forests, is chemical-free and of superior quality. Determined to get the best, we decided to explore the forests of Sarna and Shahpur. There, we found several Amla trees, but the fruits were high up in the branches, requiring someone to climb the trees to collect them. With enthusiasm and teamwork, a few members bravely climbed up while the rest helped from below. Laughter filled the air as some of the fruits accidentally fell on someone's head, leading to playful scoldings and cheerful banter. Despite these fun moments, we stayed focused, and by noon, we had gathered nearly 200 kilograms of Amla.

After harvesting, we carefully sorted the fruits. The larger ones were kept for making candy, while the smaller ones were dried to prepare powder. To learn more, we consulted an Ayurvedic doctor, who shared valuable insights into Amla's incredible health benefits. Apart from improving heart and digestive health, Amla is also an excellent remedy for cold, cough, and infections. The doctor highlighted its key advantages:

- **Heart Health:** Reduces bad cholesterol and increases good cholesterol.
- **Better Digestion:** Helps with acidity, constipation, and bloating.
- **Protection Against Infections:** Contains antibacterial and antifungal properties that boost immunity.
- **Improves Eyesight:** Regular consumption of Amla juice enhances vision.
- **Menstrual Health:** Helps regulate periods and reduces cramps.
- **Glowing Skin and Strong Hair:** Keeps skin healthy and strengthens hair.
- **Boosts Energy:** Keeps the body active and strong.

The doctor also shared simple and effective ways to consume Amla. Drinking Amla juice on an empty stomach provides maximum benefits. Amla murabba (sweet preserve) and pickle help overcome iron deficiency, while Amla powder is great for long-term use. Eating one or two Amlas daily significantly boosts energy and immunity.

Inspired by this knowledge, our team excitedly began making Amla candy and powder. Everyone played their part, reminding us that even the smallest gifts of nature can make a big difference to our health and well-being. Amla is not just a fruit—it represents our heritage and traditional wisdom.

However, through this journey, we also realized a worrying fact—Amla trees are becoming scarce in forests. This makes it our shared responsibility to plant more Amla trees during the monsoon season and encourage others to do the same. By taking this initiative, we can ensure that future generations continue to benefit from this precious natural treasure while also helping preserve our environment.



**-Asha Sharma**  
**Jagori Rural**